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ABSTRACT

Educational reform efforts to date in the United States have not been germane or responsive to the social problems of African American children. The reform efforts advanced to date have only been exercises in tinkering around the educational edges. Our educational focus, the origin of which is outlined, must shift in at least two major ways. First, we must turn from preoccupation with talent assessment and its trappings to a commitment to talent development. Second, we must as a nation move away from an obsession with social homogenization and social control to a system based on racial and cultural diversity. This paper discusses the traditional assumptions for psychological and pedagogical processes that underlie the present focus on talent assessment and compares them with alternative assumptions that underlie a focus on talent development. A second section makes a case for deep cultural structure and the incorporation of Afrocultural ethos into the pedagogical process at the deepest levels of schooling. Overdetermination is proposed as an explanatory framework for the educational process and a structural guide for reform. A table lists implications of cultural deep structure analyses. (Contains 46 references.) (SLD)

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Reformulating Educational Reform: Toward the Proactive Schooling of African American Children

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It has been long recognized that African American children do not fare well in our nation's schools. This has raised sufficient concern over the years that several programmatic efforts have been launched to rectify this reality. By and large these efforts have failed. It has also been acknowledged periodically that American schools are not generally doing a sufficient job of educating American children in general. In response, there have been a plethora of educational reform efforts. It is recognized by many that we are presently in the midst of a general educational crisis. Reform efforts of relatively recent vintage aimed at addressing the specific and general concerns include competency-based curriculum, mastery learning, and individualized instructional programming. We find token reinforcement programs, and programed instruction. There is discovery learning. There is management by objectives. There are process-oriented instructional efforts. There are skilloriented instructional efforts. There has been a call for back to basics. None of these efforts has enjoyed widespread success. They certainly have not altered the achievement status of African American children. Even the celebrated Headstart program, in spite of its lofty humanitarian aims and with certain social adjustment benefits notwithstanding, has not been documented to raise in any indelible way, the achievement status of African American children.

I have come to take the position that if we are genuinely sincere about

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ameliorating the academic difficulties of Black children who are particularly at risk educationally, and if we are serious about real educational reform in this country, we must be prepared to be more thorough in our understanding of the roots of the problems. We must be sufficiently open-minded and farsighted with regards to educational change; we must be prepared to tackle the awesome, perplexing and quite profound educational challenges before us. Indeed, I maintain that the reform efforts to date have not been germanely responsive to the social predicaments in which African American children have been distinctly placed and the putative reform thrusts that have been variously advanced, have been basically exercises in tinkering around the educational edges.

There is a wise African proverb which goes... "If you don't know where you are going, then any road will take you there." Such generally covers the efforts to enhance schooling in recent years. Indeed, effective educational reform for African American children, perhaps for all children, must start from, must be predicated on a searching understanding of the functions and purposes that public education, especially in urban settings, has served since its nominal inception in early 20th century America. This implies that altering the achievement status of African American children may require the reformulation of the nature, function and objectives of public schooling. Further, educational change must also overcome the tendency in the behavioral and educational sciences to offer singular explanatory pathways to account for antecedent-consequent relationships between educational outcomes and their precursors, or even cumulative explanations for singular outcomes. All of these stances require further explication. It is the purposes of this paper to provide just such elaboration. Yet some stage setting for this concrete

elaboration, some preliminary comments concerning these matters, are first in order.

Public education was implemented in the form that it was during the early 20th century. It represented the culminating triumphs of a legacy of social, political and economic interests that went back to revolutionary war era America and was finally secured by the confluence of a constellation of political, economic and social forces that fell in place in the years just prior to World War I (Vallance, 1974; Spring, 1990; Tyack, 1974; Kaestle, 1983). Prior to the beginning of this century there was a longstanding concern with creating a "national character" among the nation's youth; with schools supplementing if not replacing the function of the family in the imposition of moral values and behaviors consistent with this national character, and with this character defined in terms of the cultural ethos of AngloSaxons, the historically dominant ethnic group in America from its inception as a nation (Vallance, 1974; Kaestle, 1983). These concerns solidified with a new sense of urgency in the years just prior to World War I. It was during this era that there arose a veritable explosion of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe; from the non-Anglo Saxon; non--protestant European nations. This posed a threat to the dominant defining cultural reference group in this country who were profoundly concerned about insuring the inculcation of American, read Anglo Saxon (protestant) beliefs and values into these alien "ethnics" from the inappropriate regions of the European continent. The fear of the "mongrelization" of America ran deep, and stirred national concern which lead to widespread pondering, as William McDougall put it in the title of his 1921 book, "Is America safe for democracy?"

Yet this immigrant explosion did not happen without instigation. Indeed, it represented in large measure a response to the precipitous rise in the industrialization of American society. There was a rapidly expanding job market in the industrial-manufactoring sector. So the influx of these "inappropriate" immigrants was a mixed blessing. For they were needed by this society to fill the enormous demand for unskilled, low-wage-earning assembly line factory labor. Yet these immigrants needed to also become properly socialized Americans. This responsibility was to fall on the public schools. And the "one best system" (Tyack, 1974) was created by popular public demand.

This system of education was not haphazardly stitched together. It followed a master plan. The blueprint was provided by the business and corporate community. The leaders and captains of industry had vested interests in the preparation of their labor pool. They had a vested interest in there being continuity between schooling experiences and subsequent work experiences (Tyack, 1974; Persell, 1977; Carlson, 1982). The corporate leaders were also seen as society's heroes and the emulation of their economic and administrative methods was widespreadly seen as appropriate for this "one best system." And so with the reasonably full cooperation of educational leaders and politicians, the corporate-industrial model of business efficiency, quality control, centralization of authority and standardization of procedures was embraced by and large as the prototype for the construction of systems of mass public education (Cornbleth, 1984; Vallance, 1974; Spring, 1990; Tyack, 1974).

Thus mass public education, especially in urban settings, was set up to implement a particular mass acculturation function, an homogenization function, if

you will. Schools were set up to serve as bureaucratic institutions based on the prevailing corporate-industrial model which especially stressed efficiency of operation and quality control. They were set up to serve particular manpower needs of an ascendingly industrialized society such that the students so trained (or educated) by and large and with few talented exceptions, would be willing (1) to be cogs in the large industrial wheel (2) to accept low status, principally unskilled factory work while still being good society citizens, and (3) to work long hours on repetitive, tedious tasks, that were largely unrelated to personal motives, interests, desires or experiences.

Since this educational model was based on the prevailing corporate industrial prototype, then it stood to reason that efficiency of system operation was a paramount concern. An efficient system in turn would be predicated on classification and assessment. Who secured or insured this efficiency? Who were the quality control experts? Psychologists, with their new fangled "standardized" tests. Psychologists, who through their scientific and objective procedures could determine the "problem" students that caused the system to function inefficiently. Psychologists could then justify the removal of the inefficient elements for their repair, remediation or permanent segregation. Thus by definition, they were able to locate the problem of education in the individual students themselves, who potentially would undermine the organizational integrity of the school.

One of the chief consequences of these developments and functions is that talent assessment emerged as a chief preoccupation of public schooling. Talent assessment denotes that the search is to discern the relatively few who are talented enough to receive the benefits of more advanced and challenging education. It

implies separating the wheat from the chaff, since the majority of not so talented pupils would be consigned to the unskilled labor pool anyway. Talent assessment is deemed necessary in a system which not only is predicated on efficiency and quality control, but such are seen as ends in and of themselves. Assessment in this regard also implies a focus on classification and sorting of pupils and is predicated on standardization of procedures. Obviously, this brand of talent assessment is also wedded to social control.

Relatedly, also emerging as a major reason for schooling was the serious pursuit of the homogenization of the student population. Surely the pursuit of homogenization ipso facto led to the systematic suppression of genuine pluralistic expressions. The practices and procedures of schools were officially at odds with principles of multiculturalism.

These consequences surely do not exhaust all those whichensued from the construction of mass public education. But they are quite central. Time and space do not permit a more exhaustive analysis. Suffice it to say that purposes and functions of schooling as embodied for example in the pursuit of talent assessment and homogenization have persisted as major pillars in the functions school serve in the present day. And it is functions like these which have been scarcely addressed in the various reform efforts and concerns for the schooling in general or for the needs of African American children in particular.

Now surely the agenda for education described above perhaps made some sense for turn of the 20th century America, for the then social, economic and political realities. But we must ask ourselves how well does it apply today at the threshold to the 21st century? American society is becoming less reliant on heavy

industry manufacturing. Some call this a post-industrial era. The labor market is no longer dominated by low-wage factory work. The service sector is becoming the chief source of employment. Moreover, as technology becomes more sophisticated and as economic, social and even ethical demands of our society become more complex, the level of intellectual and social sophistication demanded of our students has substantially increased. The entry level skills required for participation in the labor market are becoming increasingly sophisticated. America must also compete with nations economically that are more truly racially and culturally homogeneous. Thus, these nations can more readily marshall coordinated efforts from their business, schooling and political communities to articulate national priorities and commitments that we are simply unprepared to do at present.

This concern must be understood against the reality that we have a latent pluralism in America that has always been here, but has been historically ignored in the construction of our educational system against the backdrop of the European immigrant explosion of the early 20th century. We have domestic cultural groups who have been here for centuries and who may not have voluntarily come here to seek the good life. We have groups whose relationship to the American social order has always been problematic; whose schooling remains problematic, whose schooling difficulties have never been successfully resolved. Surely African Americans fall squarely in this category. Yet the realities of the very near future are such that children from these "problematic" groups will form the lions share of this country's labor pool. They will be the ones who must occupy the increasingly sophisticated skilled positions. They are the ones this country will have to rely on socially, politically, ethically and economically. Yet they are the ones that continue

to fall under the label of educationally at risk. This poses an exceptionally demanding educational challenge for America. If our society is truly up to the task, it must find ways to turn this reality of pluralism and diversity into a national strength. Obviously homogenization of these groups has not worked. It has simply provided a convenient excuse for their diseducation. They have been the educational chaff by and large, the ones all too typically sorted out. We cannot make this shift without a profound and deep embracement of multiculturalism.

In short then, I advocate that we shift our focus educationally in at least two major ways. First, we must shift from a preoccupation with talent assessment and its trappings and move towards a commitment to talent development. Talent development connotes a concern with generating broad-based pervasive academic (broadly defined) competence among our students. Second, we must move away from an obsession with social homogenization and social control to a system predicated on cultural and racial diversity. It is not enough to simply gesture that there will be a focus on talent development. It is not enough to simply express a commitment to talent development and continue with the same assumptions which undergird talent assessment. This would be tantamount to exercises in fraudulent window dressing. It is not enough to lay claim to multiculturalism but continue the structural, curricular and cultural commitments to social homogenization and mainstream acculturation. This, in spite of the best of stated intentions, will prove ineffective. To make a genuine shift to talent development will require a fundamental change in the very ways we conceptualize the psychological processes attendant to learning/cognition, and motivation and in turn how we conceptualize the individual. It will also require that we challenge the very nature of the

knowledge that is transmitted as well as the modes of transmission. Moreover, we must come to grips with the profoundly cultural fabric of American education. Culture inheres at the deep structure level, and is so profoundly pervasive that it is taken for granted and viewed by some as forming the basis paradoxically for a "hidden curriculum." (Cornbleth, 1984; Vallance, 1974; etc.). Multicultural reform must be pitched at this deep structure level.

It will also become necessary that we provide not parsimonious and simplistically elegant explanations for the educational challenges before us no matter how alluring they may be. It is essential that we not fall into the trap of offering nicely packaged educational solutions that can be easily distilled into a single column op-ed editorial piece for the local newspaper. Schooling environments are beyond being merely complex. They are multiplex. Indeed the multiplexity of schooling environments must inform our explanations, analyses and solutions. While I will focus as examples on some alternative framing assumptions for psychological and pedagogical processes of education and on the importance of rendering multiculturalism at the deep structure level, I am also quick to point out that the analyses explanations and solutions do not simply require the straightforward introduction of these considerations into classrooms per se. These considerations are especially raised because they have been neglected and misunderstood and that they go to the very heart of what real reform efforts and genuine responsiveness to the educational needs of African American children must be informed by. But when it comes to providing full explanations, analyses and reform implementations, we must recognize that there are a multiplicity of simultaneous considerations, often contradictory and paradoxical, that must be

entertained.

Still further, the concern now being raised here is in actuality a commentary on the very nature of explanation typically offered in the behavioral and educational sciences. The structure of explanations and analyses are typically constrained by the data analytic procedures available and by the lingering influences of the constructs and methodologies Behaviorism. We rely all too often on simple cause-effect, antecedent-consequent explanations. Our accounts too often follow linear, one directional pathways. We all too often presume there is one best account, a singular source that explains one given outcome. On the contrary, several outcomes are likely to occur at any given time and for several among a larger set of possible reasons, that are often interlocking and multidirectional in their influence. Even the more sophisticated forms of data analyses today are not sufficiently equipped to handle such considerations. Let us not constrain our explanations by our statistical procedures or by outmoded conceptualizations. Let us not judge our solutions by whether they can be effectively packaged for a 20 minute television interview.

Thus, I propose we invoke the axiom of overdetermination in our treatment of educational issues. Every event occurs for any of a variety of possible reasons yet any one of these reasons may be sufficient to produce it, and that many events occur simultaneously in a given context. We can use existing statistical procedures to capture aspects of the overdetermined phenomena, but we should not in the process lose sight of the larger multiplex explanatory picture. More concretely, let us refrain from the temptation to conclude that educational success or failure hinges simply on family practices, or that the "real" problem with education is teacher attitudes etc. The actual answer I submit is "all of the above", and that each

explanatory vector has a bipolar positive through negative, as well as strength of influence characteristic. Moreover, in educational contexts, there are other educational outcomes simultaneously operative besides achievement success or failure. We have peer solidarity and identification outcomes. We have resistance learning and resilience training (Winfield, 1991). We have various socialization outcomes. We have multilevel and multidimensional attitudes toward learning and education developing. We have multiple and differing forms of intentionality manifested, which underlie the various behaviors witnessed (Shewder, 1990).

In all then, this paper will pass through three major sections. There will be a discussion of "traditional" and alternative assumptions for psychological and pedagogical processes. The former, it will be argued, underlie present day focus on talent assessment. The latter are more aligned with a focus on talent development. As will be seen, an essential focus on the concept of context will be entertained. The second section will make the case for cultural deep structure. In this regard, I join the increasing chorus of advocates for the incorporation of Afrocultural ethos into the pedagogical process. I insist that it be done at the deep structure level; that the incorporation be into the marrow of the way schooling is done and in terms of the values and contexts which inhere in the process of schooling. I will then attempt to flesh out the axiom of overdetermination as an overriding explanatory framework for educational practice and as a structural beacon for educational reform.

On Psychological and Pedagogical Assumptions

Pedagogical and instructional practices are inevitably built upon explicit but often implicit theories about learning cognition and motivation. These conceptions

are often unrevealed to the educational practitioner. Even more basically, pedagogical and instructional practices are undergirded by a set of presuppositions about the nature, and manifestations of the prevailing learning, thinking and motivational processes. At the inception of public education, these processes were particular marked by S-R psychology. Behaviorist doctrines and Associationism were quite influential in the framing of pedagogical practices (Spring, 1990). Indeed Edward Thorndike, an early architect of S-R psychology and a forerunner to Behaviorism, was also a prominent early architect of public school instructional practices (Tyack, 1974). Thus, in the earlier decades of public schooling, thinking and cognition considerations took a decided backseat to ones concerning the cementing of proper connections between eliciting stimuli and the proper responses. The conceptual baggage of traditional learning theory in turn held sway. Yet in the realm of assessment proper, the intelligence testing conceptions of people like Terman, Thurstone, and Wechsler among others, did convey some conceptions about the nature of thinking per se. Over the years, the influence of first social learning theory, and then the cognitive conceptions Piaget and even more recently, of information processing models have had their influence on instructional practices.

Regardless of source, the main the assumptions relevant to pedagogy that have traditionally undergirded pedagogy have over the years been quite consistent with a talent assessment approach to schooling. There are several assumptions with regards to cognition, learning motivation and instruction that can be identified. For one, there is the notion that thinking (if it exists at all as a phenomenon) occurs wholly inside the head and it is ultimately possible to understand thinking processes

in purely abstract forms quite apart from any concrete points of reference (Greeno, 1989; Rogoff, 1990; Shweder, 1990). Shweder (1990) for example refers to this notion in terms of the presumed existence of a "central processing mechanism", inside people's heads, whose display and workings in and of itself have been the object of a recent holy grail explanatory quest within psychology. Then too, a second is that it is widely presumed that the quality of thinking and/or of learning processes are necessarily consistent in people and across situations (Rogoff, 1990; Serpell, 1990; Greeno, 1989; Gergen, 1990). This framing assumption is or can be emphatically linked to the notion, so central to classical psychometrics, that there is a normal distribution of intellectual ability in the general population. This notion has been reified and widely taken as a fact of nature (Schwebel, 1975; Layzer, 1973). Indeed not only is standardized testing predicated upon it but often the grading systems in pedagogy are wedded to the normal distribution as well. Of course this is the notion that most people are average in intellectual ability, falling within one standard deviation of a group generated outcome mean. There are but a few that are sufficiently removed from the average to be labeled "talented." A third assumption is that the course of learning, or the development of thinking skills follows a direct input-output, cumulative, building-block process (Greeno, 1989; Friere, 1970; Sleeter and Grant, 1991). This additive, incremental assumption surely undergirds what Paulo Friere (1970) had in mind when it referred to traditional instructional practice as adhering to the "banking approach." In this regard, formal instruction is tantamount to the instructor making intellectual deposits inside students' intellectual banks and come exam time, calling for intellectual withdrawals. The more deposits that the instructors make, the greater is the knowledge or the learning that is said to

have been accumulated. This assumption is also linked to the tendency observed by Vallance (1974), Giroux and Mclaren (1986) and others that there is even an increasing tendency in formal instruction to provide students with "prepackaged ready-made thoughts" (Vallance).

Other framing assumptions focus moreso on motivational processes. There has been an abiding commitment to the promotion of internal and external forms of motivation (Nicholls, 1979; Deci 1975; Sleeter and Grant, 1991; Boykin 1977). Indeed traditional Behaviorist psychology has understood motivation exclusively in terms of this internal/external dichotomy. Motivation is seen as internal, that is residing inside the person. One is either motivated or unmotivated. Either one has it, that is is motivated, or doesn't have it, that is is unmotivated. If one is not internally motivated, then the recourse is to employ external sources of motivation. That is, one can be induced to perform through the various devices and processes attendant to rewards, reinforcements, external incentives, punishments, threats and the likes.

These various assumptions have clearcut implications for what is construed to pass for knowledge in formal educational settings. Everhart (1983) has captured it quite well in his conception of reified knowledge. Reified knowledge is that which is prepackaged, decontextualized and abstracted. It is knowledge which is linked principally to "static" information, information requiring a passive, absorbing recipient. These conceptions also converge with a prevailing notion of individualism that has been spawned and even nurtured in traditional academic settings. Carlson (1982) has persuasively claimed that due to the very nature of the corporate-industrial model that schools have emulated, and the labor necessities

historically demanded by the economic sector, schools have traditionally nurtured the "bifurcated individual." This is the notion that individuals come to separate their personal meanings, interests and enjoyment from their work experience. Surely such is required of the assembly line worker and for that matter of the white-collar office bureaucrat. Historically speaking, the bifurcation of the individual along these lines has been economically functional. You work on repetitive, tedious, uninteresting school tasks, because of the external rewards that may accrue, or because you have internally come to be "motivated" by achievement per se or competition or pleasing the teacher etc. Carlson claims that this conception of the individual parallels attributes cultivated in 20th century forms of industrial production such as standardization, specialization, fragmentation of work tasks. They lead to a reliance on self-control, self discipline and self-motivation in the abstract for students to be consistently successful in school. They lead to a stifling of spontaneity. Intentionality as expressed by the successfully bifurcated individual is expressed principally in purely instrumental terms and self interested terms. One does well in order to accomplish some end that will satisfy some ultimate personal need. Of course it can be argued that this scenario will prove far more effective in a workplace than in school. In a workplace, the economic incentives in the form of pay are readily apparent and available. No comparably effective system of incentives exists in schools. Schools don't pay students to do well. More often than not students may fail to respond consistently in terms of the incentives that are available on an ongoing basis in schools. Of course this feeds right into the notion of talent assessment. Only the comparatively "talented" few will find sufficient incentives to do well in such a system. Only the "best" students will be internally

motivated or will show the wisdom to respond to the external incentives that are provided. And when this is actualized, it lends greater credence to the assumptions of talent assessment and cements the legitimacy of the sorting and classification quests attendant to it.

Of course classical psychometric assessment is also linked to the assumptions of talent assessment. The concern is to discern who are the smart ones and who are the not so smart ones, and our assessment devices are designed to go inside the pupils' heads, (of course in an objective and standardized fashion) and make a withdrawal of the accumulated (or even "inherent") reified knowledge in order to draw the proper intellectual conclusions.

Then there are now emerging what I will call an alternative set of operative assumptions, for matters of cognition, learning and motivation. These are ones which can provide appropriate psychological infrastructure for a talent development approach to schooling practices. Now as the term implies, the attempt here is to develop academic talent in as many students as possible. The focus is on fostering pervasive intellectual development. Until incontrovertibly proven otherwise, the position is that any given child can learn developmentally appropriate content and skills; can acquire the knowledge base we challenge them with; and should be encouraged and stimulated to strive continuously for intellectual (and socioemotional and ethical) growth in all facets of school relevant activity. These alternative operative assumptions which follow are associated with recent conceptions and stances offered by a host of scholars in disparate and interdigitating arenas. Indeed, so much attention is increasingly being paid to these converging considerations that a veritable paradigm shift may be taking hold. We find an

upsurge in attention paid to the works of Vygotsky (1962) as well as extensions served up by an expanding cadre of neoVygotsky scholars (e.g. Valsiner, 1987; Rogoff, 1990; Wertsch, 1985; Brown and Palinscar, 1986; Belmont, 1989). Work of cross-cultural psychologists also is consistent (e.g. Goodnow, 1990; Serpell, 1990). We can see it in the arguments of recent philosophically oriented critics of psychological constructs and explanations (e.g. Shewder, 1990; Gergen; 1978; 1990; Sampson, 1977; 1978; Riegel, 1979). We can see it in the positions taken by heterodox cognitive and motivation psychologists (e.g. Walker, 1980; Greeno, 1989; Czisenmahayli, 1990; Nicholls, 1979; 1989; Ginsburg, 1986). It is surely evident in the conceptions of psychologists from domestic cultural groups (e.g. Nobles, 1991; Jones, 1979; Ramirez and Castenada, 1974; Sue, 1991; Akbar, 1985). Similar developments can be gleaned from work in sociolinguistics (e.g. Cazden, 1981; Erickson, 1987) and psychologically oriented anthropologists as well (e.g. Ogbu, 1978; 1990; Andrade, 1990; Howard and Scott, 1981).

One major alternative assumption is that thinking is largely contextualized (Rogoff, 1990; Greeno, 1989; Shweder, 1990). That is to say, it is fundamentally and typically linked to specific situations. Thus, it is not conceived as occurring in a vacuum or as necessarily abstract, that is independent of time, place and circumstance. But instead thinking can not be fully understood without reference to a specified situation. We don't just think per se. We think about specific people, things, experiences and events that are inextricably tied to specific situations. Moreover, thinking not only is linked to but also inevitably occurs in a actual context. Thinking has a definite context of application.

The second assumption is that thinking is not a neutrally executed activity.

People don't think in neutral terms but according to or in terms of personal frames of reference. They invoke as Greeno (1989) says "personal epistemologies." People think from certain vantage points, value orientations, frames of reference, theories of reality, born out of prior experiences (see for example, Akbar,1985; Gergen, 1978; Rogoff, 1990; Spence, 1985 etc.). Moreover, these personal frames, biases, viewpoints, theories and the likes guide ones intentions, their understanding and interpretation of presently occurring experiences and the character and content of their thinking (see for example, Jones, 1979; Ramirez and Castenada, 1974; Serpell, 1990; Valsiner, 1987; Shweder, 1990 etc.). It should also be stressed that personal epistemologies are imbued in contexts. People construe and construct contexts in terms of the prevailing explicit or implicit personal epistemologies. Contexts are inevitably value-laden. More often than not, the values which are construed as defining a situation are those of the participants with the most authority or power in that setting. Yet such a dictated personal frame may not be the only one that can be gleaned from that setting.

Then there is the notion that Greeno (1989) refers to as "conceptual competence." By this is meant that due to prior experiences individuals will have even implicit intuitions about some knowledge or skill domain even if it cannot be readily articulated in specific and concrete ways. People will have informal understanding of phenomena that over time and with the proper instruction or structured learning environment, it can become formal understanding. Therefore implicit competencies unfold into explicit competencies. This quite often occurs in the course of interactions with other people, especially with others more knowledgeable than the target person (Rogoff, 1990; Wertsch, 1985; Brown and

Palinscar, 1986; Parham and Parham, 1989). An extension of this line of argument is that people's explicit competencies are linked to certain contexts but not to others. In any event, it can be drawn from this line of reasoning that learning and/or the development of thinking, quite often occurs through a reorganization process, rather than through incremental impositions on an original blank slate. Since individuals have personal epistemologies and some form of prior knowledge, they do not receive information as though they are passive registers. They will have opinions about it. They will be receptive, indifferent or rejecting toward it. They will in some form evaluate the input effort. Although a child's understanding in a given context be unrefined and although it may be linked to out of school experiences, it has legitimacy and currency. Children do not enter learning situations cold, even if their knowledge is in rudimentary form, or their lenses for viewing the learning experience are divergent from the teacher's.

In the domain of motivation, there is recognition that the internal/external dichotomy does not exhaust all possibilities. There is a third brand, intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is that which inheres, that which resides within the interaction between one and his/her environment (Boykin; 1977; Hunt, 1965; Walker, 1980). It is tied to the stimulation value of the interactional context, and/or to its personal significance. As such, it is tied to such factors as the interestingness, novelty, salience and meaning of the interaction for a given individual. The locus of the motivation is not in the environment or the individual, but the nexus is located in the personenvironmental interaction in and of itself.

Moreover, absorbing or engaging one more fully in an activity implicates the operation of intrinsic motivation. External rewards typically do not lead to

genuine absorption in a given activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Deci, 1975). Personally meaningful, stimulating, and valued contexts are more likely to yield intrinsic motivation and in turn genuine absorption. Then too, absorption can often be inherently enjoyable. Individuals will endeavor to produce it when it does not exist. They will create absorbing contexts for themselves or initiate an activity which they find interesting or meaningful even if the activity is not being currently sanctioned by the one in authority and the context the individual constructs may be different from the one officially constructed. Thus, often when one is not doing what one is "supposed", it may not simply be because they are unmotivated per se, they may just be intrinsically engaged in a different activity. The pedagogical implications of all this are rather clear. Csikszentmihalyi, (1990), a proponent of introducing intrinsic motivation into classroom settings has argued... " the chief impediment to learning is.. that students do not wish to (learn)... If educators invested a fraction of the energy they now spend trying to transmit information in trying to stimulate the students' enjoyment of learning, we could achieve much better results." p115-116.

Now this package of assumptions conspires to yield a different type of knowledge production. Everhart (1983) has referred to it as regenerative knowledge. This is knowledge that is constructed in real contexts by individuals attempting to negotiate their everyday lives. It is knowledge that is not imposed on people but that which is created through social interactions, through negotiated participation and through active transactions with people places things and circumstances. Furthermore, the implication is that the learner is an active one, who is prone to critical thinking and (even nascent) metacognitive understanding of the

predicaments in which he or she is placed or places themselves.

The individual, who is conceived as located at the intersection of all of these assumptions, is surely not bifurcated, instead is, I would label, integrated. If the educational environment is more sensitive to the contexts of learning and thinking, if it is elicitous of learning and thinking, if it recognizes the importance of childrens' personal lenses, is mindful of providing learning situations which are personally meaningful, stimulating and engaging, is encouraging of learning in the form of active and critical knowledge production, and is embedded in a web of social interrelationships, then there will be the nurturance of the integrated individual. This is one who does not see schoolwork as inevitably tedious and unfulfilling, one who is not driven to stand alone inspired exclusively by self interests, but one who is working in partnership with others in the learning environment towards the development of his or her talents as he or she is being properly prepared for the 21st century.

It seems appropriate to distill the foregoing analyses and arguments into specific points to consider for pedagogical practice. For one, it can be gleaned that contextual factors can serve to elicit or trigger thought processes. Indeed, certain contexts serve to facilitate thinking for certain people better than others might. As such then, the quality of thought is linked to the appropriateness of context. Then too, the appropriateness of a given context is linked to personal frames, epistemologies, values and experiences that are embedded in it, afforded by it or that are allowed to be expressed within its confines. Moreover such a context is more intrinsically motivating. Then too, the development of thinking is tied to the unfolding, refinement and crystallization of existing competencies by allowing for

the practice or exercise of relevant, critical thinking skills. In turn, the more intrinsically motivating are the contexts, the more exercise, practice and involvement there will be by the learner. Moreover intellectual development is fostered by increasing or broadening the contexts of application of critical relevant thinking skills. The end result should be the fostering of regenerative forms of knowledge production.

Public schooling is typically conducted in synchrony with traditional operative assumptions about learning thinking and motivation. This has exacerbated the educational problems of all too many African American children, thereby placing them at educational risk. More specifically, learning thinking and motivation are construed as context free enterprises. That is, the context of education is deemed of little or no consequence to pedagogy, to the learning process. Some children display the ability in their heads, many do not. Some kids are motivated or responsive to school based incentives. Many are not. Some kids show intellectual inclinations. Many do not. Some kids learn what we teach them,. Many don't. Furthermore, the assessment devices employed confirm these educational realities. When many Black children are unresponsive, it is thus presumed that they are uninterested in learning, that they are unmotivated; that they have learning problems, in the form of deficiencies inside their heads per se. They are deemed not bright enough, and the tests bear out these claims. Black students many of them, are judged thereby to be of low academic potential. The search ensues for what about their out of school experiences would have led to such an academic predicament for them.

On the other hand, it could be (from a talent development standpoint) that

we have not provided educational contexts that sufficiently trigger their intellectual engagement, that draw sufficiently on their existing competencies, that sufficiently activate intrinsic motivation. Such a more hopeful scenario would hinge on these educational contexts allowing for the expression of values, personal experiences and frames of reference, behavioral repertoires that would yield more responsiveness and receptiveness. All this implies culture. It is in the concept of culture that we can congeal matters of values, personal frames, epistemologies and experiences. Thus it can be advanced that a central key to fostering talent development in African American children is through providing for them, culturally sensitive, culturally appropriate educational contexts. This matter will now be taken up in more detail in the next section.

Cultural Deep Structure and the Schooling of AfricanAmerican Children.

It is becoming increasingly fashionable to bring issues of culture to bear on educational analyses. Indeed, multiculturalism is a term enjoying considerable currency. It is in vogue as it were. But as a rule, the analyses of culture which have been offered have tended to be insufficiently penetrating as well as myopic. Indeed, matters of culture reside in the very marrow of the schooling process. They pervade virtually all facets of the schooling enterprise. In a phrase, if we are to comprehend the role of culture in education, we must access culture at the level of deep structure. Thus, we must recognize that cultural phenomena already form the substrate of schooling. Cultural matters are at the heart of the socialization function schools were set up to address in the first place. Matters of social control are indeed matters of cultural reinforcement or inculcation. So when there is talk of now incorporating the culture of various ethnic minorities into schooling, we cannot

operate as though this will be done vis a vis a preexisting, culturally neutral educational context. We must not ignore that this will have implications for the central socialization function that schools serve. We should not expect that it will simply affect the repertoire of teaching techniques that are employed. We must appreciate that this will go substantially beyond adding dark faces to textbooks, additional holidays to the calendar, greater sensitivity to odd or "different" (read not as appropriate but we must be sympathetic) forms of expression, and even providing new history lessons or information on the contributions of minority groups. So what then will be required?

A starting point is to first grapple with a working conception of culture. Clearly, culture can have a myriad of definitions and connotations. Indeed, there are many legitimate forms. I submit that for present purpose the proper focus should be on what I choose to call fundamental culture. this form has to do with how a given reference group codifies reality. As DuBois (1972) claims, the codification of reality revolves around the resolution of what is the nature of the system of things, what are humans' relationships to this system and what is the nature of humans' relationships with each other. How a given group codifies reality leads to the formulation of a particular worldview, and/or a coordinated set of beliefs or belief system. Beliefs and worldviews have to do with vantage points, perspectives from which there is understanding, interpretation and experiencing of reality. Such has to do with general outlooks, that which is taken as "true." A given worldview and belief system in turn give rise to a corresponding set of core cultural values. That is, emanating are a set of interests, priorities, preferences, goals. Values have to do with that which is esteemed, emphasized, looked favorably upon. These core

cultural values in turn give rise to a set of behavioral expressions, motifs, inclinations, styles and such. These expressions may be in the form of particular receptiveness to or responsiveness to appropriately culture-ladened contexts.

This multi-faceted, and three-tiered hierarchically organized system for construing culture is deemed fundamental because it represents the manifestations of foundational philosophical assumptions. It has to do with issues of cosmology, ontology and axiology, and in the sense of informing the understanding and interpretation of reality, it implicates issues of epistemology as well.

For several years now, a literature has existed on the "hidden curriculum" of schooling (Spring, 1990; Vallance, 1974; Cornbleth, 1984; Tyack, 1974 etc.). This notion of hidden curriculum is quite akin the notion of cultural deep structure. As Cornbleth (1984) asserts, through this hidden curriculum "individual students are assumed to acquire prevailing worldviews, norms and values as well as predefined...roles in authority relationships. Collectively, such effects are seen as serving a social control function by perpetuating existing social structures and the standards which support them.." (p30). Elements of this hidden curriculum would include features of texts, curriculum materials, teachers -student interactions and school policies and routines. Thus matters of curriculum have a wider zone of operation than one typically presumes. Marshall Mccluhan's often quoted statement that the "medium is the message," surely is operating in this hidden curriculum. Paradoxically, that which we call hidden was quite blatant during the 19th century and the early part of this century. Indeed as Vallance (1974) has argued, it was extolled as a major benefit of schooling and was a major justification for universal public education. Indeed, that we refer to this social control/socialization function as

hidden is testimony to how well this function was effectively carried out. As Vallance has stated, the function only became hidden because this function was so pervasively accepted and widely followed that homogenization could be taken for granted, and the concomitant practices, routines, postures and structures could take on functionally autonomous lives of their own as merely inherently proper ways to do schooling per se.

Because this homogenization/socialization function now operates in an essentially tacit fashion, it becomes difficult not only to challenge it (What is there to challenge? This is just the way schools are suppose to operate. How else can a teacher do his or her job?), but also to offer viable alternatives to it. The cultural medium of schooling operates consequently in a hegemonic fashion (Apple, 1979). The tacit character of schools' present cultural deep structure is well illuminated in a recent article by Lisa Delpit (1988). She asserts that there is a culture of power in our nation's schools. This culture of power represents the culture of those who hold the power. The rules of this culture of power go unarticulated. Some children come to school already with knowledge of these rules based on their out of school experiences, even if this knowledge for the very young is itself tacit. Other children will come to school insufficiently tuned into or knowledgeable about this culture of power, but in their out of school experiences they have been prepared to be receptive to the reigning culture of power or at least not be resistant to it. Still other children will come to school with a different set of cultural rules they have become accustomed to behaving in accordance with. They also will not even tacitly know the rules of the culture of power. They in turn will be penalized for not knowing or for appearing to be resistant to it. These rules have to do with forms of behavior,

discourse communication styles, routines, what is to be valued etc. In short they speak to, as Bordieux and his associates (Bordieux and Passeron, 1977) call it, "cultural capital." Matters become complicated by the fact that as Delpit has observed, those responsible for the implementation of the culture of power are least likely to claim its existence. It is difficult to change that which one does not even acknowledge.

What are some of the specific manifestations of this culture of power? Siverstein and Krate (1975) give us some insight when they claim that schools especially treasure strong impulse control, the elevation of reason over emotion, and the inclination to funnel effort into tasks that are unrelated to personal motives, wants and goals. Geneva Gay (1975) has offered still other factors. These include movement restriction, and a task rather than a people orientation. Several have pointed to an emphasis on "rugged" individualism and interpersonal competition (Katz, 1985; Gay, 1975; Spence, 1985; Nicholls, 1989; Eccles et al, 1984; Nelson-Legall, 1991). Elsewhere, Katz (1985) has spoken of a delayed gratification emphasis (providence), being rigidly beholden to clock time with time viewed as a commodity, an emphasis on individual destiny control and the linking of individual status to possessions, be they physical, material or intellectual.

These kinds of factors form the very fabric of education as it has been traditionally conceived. They form the matrix of the behavioral expectations that teachers and other school personnel require of students even when they are not fully conscious that this is a central objective. These form the landscape upon which pedagogy is enacted. They often are treated as prerequisites to learning. They, in the form of behavioral expressions, are what a good student should act like, be like,

should value. They comprise the elements of the cultural deep structure of schooling. They are manifestations of Anglo-Euro American cultural ethos.

Sapon-Shevin and Schneidewind (1991) provide an illuminating example of how elements of this culture laden hidden curriculum get enacted in an actual classroom setting: "The teacher is standing at the board and has asked a question of the group of students at her feet. Six or seven students wave their hands wildly, begging the teacher to call on them. the rest of the class...watch the drama unfolding... The teacher calls on the waving hand which belongs to Michael; the other children groan and hope that he will get it wrong so that they can have a chance. He does and they cheer. One child snickers to her neighbor, `He's always wrong.' the teacher calls on Nicole, who gives the right answer, and the teacher says `Great.' the other children who had had their hands up now put them down, deflated and disappointed. One child mutters, `Nicole thinks she's so smart,' and Nicole blushes and looks embarrassed." p.159.

These authors go on to say: "What has this lesson taught children? Although the official subject was prepositions, there were many other lessons as well. Powerful messages and values have been communicated by the teacher's interactions with the children. The children have learned that although it is good to be right, it is more important to be fast. They have learned that only one child can get the teacher's approval, and that other children are what stand in the way of them receiving recognition and praise... Children learn that some people are `winners' and others `losers,'...and that success is a scarce commodity , not available to all." p.160.

From the following quite cogent example, it is clear that interpersonal

competition was being promoted as was rugged individualism. It is also clear that Nicole will be perceived as possessing "smartness" and Michael "dumbness". It is also abundantly clear that talent development was not an operating objective in this setting. Competition and rugged individualism are also manifested in innocuous "fun and play" settings as well. Consider the popular child's game of musical chairs (Sapon-Shevin and Schneidewind, 1991). Here there will always be one less chair than there are children. There can only be one winner. The game is a microcosm of a survival of the fittest struggle. It is a game, but one with a powerful cultural signal.

When children are ordered to do their own work, arrive at their own individual answers, work only with their own materials, they are being sent cultural messages. When children come to believe that getting up and moving about the classroom is inappropriate, they are being sent powerful cultural messages. When children come to confine their "learning" to consistently bracketed time periods; when they are consistently prompted to tell what they know and not how they feel, when they are led to believe that they are completely responsible for their own success and failure; when they are required to consistently put forth considerable effort for efforts sake on tedious and personally irrelevant tasks, and when these things are accomplished in a routinized almost matter of fact kind of way and all of this is reinforced in terms of the themes they are presented in their texts and worksheets, then they are pervasively having cultural lessons imposed on them.

To be sure, children do have a responsibility to master the social and task -related skills teachers expect from them and to negotiate the interpersonal demands placed upon them by peers and adults (Taylor, 1991). But when factors like

emotional containment and delay of gratification are not seen as culturally valued expressions, but as signs of "social maturity" (Alexander and Entwisle, 1988), and when children are penalized for not knowing that such are part of the behavioral rules, or because they may display alternative expressions, then such children are put at a needless disadvantage, especially when the press is to pursue talent development. Against this backdrop, indeed, it must be viewed with some caution that Alexander and Entwisle, (1988) found gratification delay and emotional containment were positively related to achievement in 1st and 2nd grade Black children. Children less likely to display these attributes or value them, will be viewed with greater negative expectancy by their teachers and will be given less access to pedagogy, and greater efforts will be made to subject them to social control.

On the other hand, a growing chorus of scholars has in recent years called for cultural analyses in accounting for psychological and educational phenomena. Witness especially, the important contributions of Spence (1985); Brofebrenner, Kessel, Kessen, and White, (1986); Rogoff, (1990); Tharp, (1989); Giroux, (1983); Erickson, (1987); Cummins, (1986); Howard and Scott, (1981); Kagan et al, (1985); Hall, (1989); Valsiner, (1987), among others. Consider that Janet Spence, (1985) in her APA Presidential address, stated "Greater attention to the cultural milieu in which the real life behaviors of purported interest occur may lead both to more useful controlled investigations and to richer, more significant theories." (p.1286). Elsewhere (Brofebrenner, Kessel, Kessen, and White, 1986), after a rather protracted critical discussion of the status of the field of developmental psychology, four of the most distinguished developmentalists of our time concurred

that "...the child, or more specifically, our conceptions of the child are cultural inventions (or constructions); developmental psychology is itself a cultural invention (or construction); the conceptions and activities of the community of developmental psychologists are embedded in, and shaped by larger cultural forces; and the discussions of `development' and the praxis of developmentalists are inherently linked to values and to moral considerations." (p. 1227).

Still further, several scholars (e.g. Rogoff, 1990; Valsiner, 1987 among others), inspired by the earlier contributions of Vygotsky, have promulgated the notion that human development fundamentally occurs in a cultural context. A central theme in this regard is the concept of "intersubjectivity." Rogoff (1990) defines this as " a shared focus and purpose between children and their more skilled partners and their challenging and exploring peers." p. 8.

Clearly implied by this depiction is that development is literally manufactured out of social dynamics, out of the social nexus of interpersonal relationships. As Gergen (1990) argues, intersubjectivity is predicated on mutual understanding, or understanding each other's understanding if you will. All this implies that being "on the same cultural page" is essential to successful intersubjectivity. As Andrade (1990) has stated, intersubjectivity implies that hearers and speakers operate from the same set of meanings. All this can lead to the inference that when social participants operate from the same personal epistemologies, share a common cultural frame of reference, then intersubjectivity is more greatly established and there is more likely to be the promotion of learning, of intellectual development, at last as construed by the more advanced participant. The educational implications of this scheme should be rather straightforward.

Teachers are more effective teachers, learners are more effective learners, when intersubjectivity has been firmly established , when it is reasonably operative. When participants are on different cultural pages, intersubjectivity is undermined and in turn, so can be the learning of the relevant lesson.

Moving even more squarely into the educational arena, recently Kagan et al (1985) have advanced the structural bias hypothesis. This is essentially the notion that when the "official" structure or organization of classroom activity matches the cultural values that certain students bring with them, then learning will be facilitated, but when such does not match the cultural values of certain students, learning will not be optimized for these students.

A logical next step in the line of arguments presented, is that there should be the promotion of more culturally compatible learning contexts for children who are traditionally placed at risk by traditional schooling practices and learning contexts. A recent pamphlet produced by the Educational Research Service (1991) has summarized much of the current thinking on this subject. This compendium entitled "Culturally sensitive instruction and student learning" was tellingly sponsored by several school personnel professional organizations. By culturally sensitive instruction is meant implementing "... teaching techniques and environments to match the cultural traits and patterns of [the] student population." (p. 20).

One of the more widely cited programs that has attempted to utilize "culturally sensitive instruction" is the Kamehameha Early Education Project, or the KEEP program (Tharp, 1989). This program was explicitly designed to enhance the academic achievement of educationally at risk indigenous Hawaiian children. Extensive ethnographic work revealed that the natal culture put a heavy

emphasis on child peer activity. Consequently, cooperative work groups became more prevalent in the school setting. In reading activities a "talk story" method was employed, which paralleled certain social interactions out of school and which afforded the children the opportunity to elaborate orally in a group setting on what they were reading. Moreover, reading and study materials more greatly reflected relevant experiences of the children. The program has proven highly successful. Implementing a similarly produced program with Navajo Indian children also produced positive achievement results (Tharp, 1989; Vogt, Jordan and Tharp, 1987).

Systematic efforts to incorporate more relevant cultural factors for certain domestic groups have been viable. It would seem to follow that similar efforts on behalf of African American children should be encouraged as well. Indeed, there have been a plethora of advocates of this position in recent years. Consider the works and positions of Willis (1989), Morgan, (1980, 1990); Gordon, (1982); Delpit, (1988); Irvine, (1990); Gay, (1975, 1988); Rashid, (1981); Henderson and Washington, (1975); Miller-Jones, (1989): Taylor, (1991); Nelson-Legall and Jones, (1991); Parham and Parham, (1989); Hale, (1986); Simmons, (1985); Shade, (1989); Bell and McGraw-Burrell, (1988) among many others. In general the arguments advanced, as I distill them and fashion them into the themes of the present paper, are that many African American children bring a distinctive cultural capital with them into school settings. That is, they bring modes of operating, vantage points, frames of reference; meaning and interpretation systems, values and readinesses to be responsive and receptive, sensitivities and sensibilities, that are culturally informed. But as such, this cultural capital is likely to clash in certain

ways with the mainstream cultural ideals that schools promote, espouse, and even require. This occurrence can lead to turning many of these students off because their more customary modes are stifled, seen as inappropriate, dishonored, and additionally, since avenues for the meaningful incorporation of these modes are not provided, key cognitive and motivational processes will not be capitalized upon. I submit that by capitalizing on Black cultural capital, we can among other things, create better intersubjectivity, we can access intrinsic motivation, we can provide opportunities for the exercise of certain cognitive skills practiced in out of school settings. The contexts of pedagogy if not of schooling for African American children should reflect Afrocultural expression. I submit that genuine effectiveness will transpire if the infusion of Afrocultural expression occurs at the deep structure level of schooling.

To be sure, the notion of a distinctive Afrocultural ethos existing in the lives of extant African Americans has proven to be a quite controversial proposition. Indeed the cultural integrity of certain domestic cultural groups has been seemingly more readily acknowledged. There seems less reluctance to accept the existence of Hispanic culture, Asian culture, Native American culture, or even natal Hawaiian culture. Yet a distinctive Afrocultural ethos has proven difficult to accept by many. It seems this is so in part because it is presumed that whatever remnants of a distinctive Black culture that may have persisted have been eliminated by the experience of slavery and surely by geographical dislocation in the post-slavery experiences of African Americans. Quite frankly, I believe an even more central reason is that much of what is attributed to Afrocultural ethos simply violates the cultural sensibilities of many people, be they White or Black, who have accepted or

internalized mainstream cultural ideals beliefs and values, or at who least view "reality" through mainstream cultural lenses. Regardless of how some may view such an ethos, it would be intellectually irresponsible to ignore the impressive array of evidence that has been generated by such noted scholars as Lawrence Levine, (1977), Sterling Stuckey, (1987); Lorenzo Turner, (1949); Robert Farris Thompson, (1983); Wade Nobles, (1991); among several others, which documents compellingly the existence of a cultural ethos in the lives of African Americans that is emphatically linked to traditional African ethos.

To be sure, this Afrocultural ethos is not shared by all African Americans to the same degree. Certain aspects of it may be more evidently embraced or realized for some, while other facets may be more greatly represented in the lives of others. In general, it is likely to be more manifest in those African Americans most disconnected or disenfranchised from the current mainstream of American life. Yet, the ethos does find significant expression just the same. Moreover, this ethos does not exhaust all of the experiences of African American people. Elswhere, I and others (Boykin, 1983; 1986; Boykin and Toms, 1985; Boykin and Ellison, In Press; Cole, 1970; Jones, 1979) have spoken to three distinct realms of social experience which inform the lives of extant African Americans. There is the Mainstream experience, which fundamentally speaks to participation and orientation towards the institutions and ideals of Anglo-Euro-American cultural reality. All individuals within the physical boundaries of this country are in contact with this experience. There is the Minority experience, which embodies for African Americans the participation and orientation towards those facets of existence defined through racial and economic oppression, through low status and social

marginalization. All who by virtue of group membership fall prey to oppression, low status or marginalization, regardless of the source and, for that matter, regardless of the group's relative size, participate in and must orient towards the Minority experience. But for African Americans, there is also the Afrocultural experience. It is this realm that captures the fundamental cultural integrity of African Americans which represents the continuation of a legacy from Africa that is at least 5000 years old; a legacy of such prepotency that it is been maintained, to be sure in various forms, throughout the African diaspora. This, in spite of pronouncements to the contrary, in spite of slavery, oppression, colonialism, other cultural intrusions and even in spite of organized, "official", or institutional efforts to demean or obliterate it.

Given these three informing experiential realms, it may prove useful to distinguish between African American culture, which embodies the confluence of all three realms and Afrocultural ethos or Black culture, which speaks germanely to the fundamental cultural manifestation that is a vector of African cultural ethos (Boykin, 1983).

It is surely appropriate to ask how an Afrocultural ethos could be maintained for Black people against the stultifying character of Black peoples' experiences in America. How could a Black culture persist in the midst of its "official" resistance, countering social forces, against the backdrop of a pervasive dominant cultural reality, and even with many African Americans themselves not overtly acknowledging the existence of such an ethos? The effective transmission mechanisms are not that difficult to discern. We first should begin with the premise that there exists an identifiable milieu, that is fundamentally Afrocultural. When I

speak of milieu, I refer to a set of situations, contexts, formal and informal institutions, interpersonal relationship patterns, customs, rituals, artistic and recreational endeavors, all of which have a coherent grammar to them; which taken together, have an integrity of their own. This Afrocultural milieu is transmitted from generation to generation principally by people of African descent, yet is available literally for anyone to participate in, in varying degrees of involvement. However, since this milieu is rooted in traditional African ethos, it is more likely to be accessible to African Americans in this country. African Americans are more likely to be influenced by it, perhaps especially those from low income backgrounds who have less access to mainstream arenas of culture.

Moreover, because of the participation in, and perhaps more crucially, by virtue of having a positive orientation towards this milieu, any given individual is presented with an Afrocultural core set of certain behavioral expectations. One is presented with certain opportunities to exercise relevant behavioral expressions. One also is exposed to certain implicit or explicit values and beliefs to be incorporated. It may even be conveyed that certain other behavioral expressions, beliefs and values (e.g. ones associated with the mainstream) are to be rejected.

This brings us to another point, proximity and access alone surely do not guarantee there will be influence or that values and behavioral expressions will be embraced or adopted. But this is likely to be the case for many African Americans just the same with regards to Afrocultural ethos. For one, this cultural milieu saturates the proximal experiences of many African Americans. It is conveyed in ones household on a continuing and pervading basis. It exists among ones peers, and in social transactions with other African Americans. It inheres in social,

recreational and artistic events to which many African Americans are repeatedly exposed. It is on the playgrounds that kids visit. It is in the barber shops and beauty parlors. It is on the street corners. It is in the church services. It is in the air around many African Americans . It resides in the ambience and patterns of their everyday, ordinary lives. Thus African Americans are conditioned even if tacitly to the corresponding behavioral expressions at the very least. Afrocultural expressions are available to be practiced on an ongoing, continuous, everyday basis. But since there exists a coherency and grammar to these expressions, they extrapolate to coherent values and beliefs as well. Put in other terms, the patterns of Afrocultural ethos have axiological, cosmological and ontological moorings even if unstated. The patterns of Afrocultural ethos are comfortable for, familiar to, feel good to, are often sources of enjoyment for, and are associated with significant others in the lives of many African American children, especially in their early years when their access to mainstream institutions has been limited and their understanding of the ramifications of the Minority experience (although they surely engage its adverse manifestations) is relatively limited as well. Surely all of this can lead individuals to be receptive to situations where such Afrocultural ingredients are present; or where the opportunity for the manifestations of Afrocultural expressions are provided. The engagement in such contexts affords opportunities to practice Afrocultural expressions and in turn to exercise central cognitive operations and emerging cognitive skills. It stands to reason that participation in such contexts will be intrinsically motivating. It seems to follow that also emerging from this constellation of experiences will be a culturally informed frame of reference for interpreting and understanding reality.

One cannot glean from this exposition that I argue that Black culture is what Black people do, or that Afrocultural expression represents racial determinism. This kind of thinking breeds overgeneralization and racial stereotyping. Instead what should be gleaned is that Afrocultural expression is picked up, embraced or responded to in a favorable fashion on an essentially stochastic basis. Technically, anyone of any race could acquire aspects of Afrocultural ethos. The acquisition is linked on a probabilistic basis to accessibility, availability, familiarity, primacy of experiences, role-modeling which in turn lead to ones orientation toward the ethos or various aspects of it and the degree of susceptibility to, receptiveness to and pervasiveness of Afrocultural conditioning. Of course it stands to reason that African Americans are more likely to make the acquisition. Yet, it follows that diversity will abound among African Americans as well, in terms of what aspects get expressed, what gets practiced, how widespread is ones receptiveness, how deep and elaborated is ones involvement and so forth.

What is the concrete substance of this Afrocultural ethos? Drawing on my own previous work (Boykin, 1977; 1978) and the works of others (e.g. Jones, 1979; Levine, 1977; Akbar, 197?; Nobles, 1986; Young, 1970; 1974; White, 1970; Dixon, 1976; to acknowledge some notable examples), I have subsequently distilled nine dimensions of Afrocultural ethos which find manifestation in the lives of African Americans (Boykin, 1983; 1986; Boykin and Toms, 1985). These dimensions are Spirituality- which connotes an acceptance of a non-material higher force which pervades all of life's affairs, (2) Harmony- which implies that ones functioning is inextricably linked to nature's order and that one should be synchronized with this order, (3) Movement- which connotes a premium placed on

the interwoven amalgamation of movement, (poly)rhythm, dance, percussion, and embodied in the musical beat, (4) Verve- which connotes a particular receptiveness to relatively high levels of sensate (i.e. intensity and variability of) stimulation, (5) Affect- which implies the centrality of affective information, of emotional expressiveness and the equal and integrated importance of thoughts and feelings, (6) Expressive Individualism- which denotes the culling of uniqueness of personal expression, of style and of genuineness of self expression, (7) Communalismwhich implies a commitment to the fundamental interdependence of people, and to the importance of social bonds, relationships and the transendence of the group, (8) Oralitywhich connotes the centrality of oral/aural modes of communication for conveying full meaning and to the cultivation of speaking as a performance, and (9) Social Time Perspective- which denotes a commitment to a social construction of time as personified by an event orientation.

In offering these dimensions, it should again be kept in mind that there will be diversity in how strongly any or all of these dimensions are expressed, embraced or positively oriented towards as a stochastic function of factors like availability, primacy and the presence of competing alternative cultural modes.

Having laid out these dimensions of Afrocultural expression, it seems appropriate to revisit the issue of cultural sensibilities. For there exist profound incompatibilities in the minds of most between this cultural system and AngloEuroAmerican ethos. It has proven difficult in this society to discern the integrity which inheres in Afrocultural ethos. It is presently difficult to place this ethos in the service of positive striving within mainstream American institutions. Moreover, when one operates from a mainstream cultural ethos it has been

temptingly easy to see Afrocultural expression in pejorative terms. When one conceives of reality in more strictly concrete material terms, it becomes easy to see spirituality negatively as voodoo or unscientific. When one extols the virtues of rugged, competitive individualism, then it is easy to see communalism as character weakness and dependency. When one places a premium on movement compression and impulse control, then a rhythmic-movement orientation can be coded as hyperactivity. An affective orientation can be viewed as immature, irrational, being too emotional, when one elevates cognition over all other forms of human psychological functioning.

One can therefore imagine, how patterns of Afrocultural expression will be perceived in traditional school settings. The integrity of such expression will likely be overlooked or dismissed. The opportunities to capitalize on contexts which can incorporate such inclinations and therefore tap into crucial intellectual and motivational processes will be missed. Efforts to instill mainstream ethos is likely to go awry. But this need not be the case, especially if there is sincere commitment to talent development. All of what we have argued so far in this paper is captured in capsule form in table one.

I believe that there are three logically distinctpedagogical issues to consider in this cultural deep structure analysis. These are the issues of Afrocultural integrity, Afrocultural continuity and Mainstream cultural fluency. Presently there is little regard given in schools for the integrity of the Afrocultural experience. This has implications for the domain of teacher (or other school personnel) attitudes and expectations with regard to children who display Afrocultural expression. These children's displays will be viewed in pejorative terms. They will be misunderstood

and misconstrued as examples of misbehavior, inappropriateness and harken the need for behavioral control. In doing so, more academic time will be taken up in behavioral control activities, getting the children to behave properly, controlling their "unsocialized" actions, castigating their "bad attitudes," than in time spent on pedagogy per se (see Leacock, 1969). Moreover, teacher's expectations for these children is not likely to be particularly positive. They will not as likely be expected to succeed (see Gilmore, 1985 for an example). Yet these children are not cultural tabula rasas. They may not be able to articulate their ethos, yet they are likely to perceive that the efforts to demean their expressions and interests are personal attacks and they will resist these efforts to undermine their integrity. This of course can lead to an us vs. them mentality and create contests of power in classroom settings. Children may even come to increase their use of Afrocultural expression as a device to protect themselves against efforts to undermine them (see Piestrup, 1973).

On the other hand, when children's Afrocultural expression is seen as having integrity, as having coherency and as making sense in these children's lives, as representing at least a central component of these children's legitimate frame of reference, perhaps more positive educational consequences can ensue from this alone. For sure, since less time will be consumed with efforts to contained the putative unruliness, "bad habits" and improper attitudes, more time will be available for pedagogy per se. Then too, children will less likely be needlessly viewed as of low academic ability. Their potential to excel is more likely to be discerned. Beyond this, there will be less need for the students to create barriers between themselves and their instructors. Indeed, the possibility of even forging out educational

partnerships is increased.

With regard to continuity, when no effort is made to incorporate Afrocultural ethos into the contexts of pedagogy, certain problematic circumstances can arise. For one, there will not be outlets for the expression of existing conceptual competencies that have been developed independently of formal school settings. Further, the skills that have been developed will be practiced in other than school settings. Perhaps on street corners, on basketball courts, in peer settings, maybe even in antisocial activities. A lack of Afrocultural incorporation can also be motivationally debilitating. Opportunities to tap into intrinsic motivation in particular will be missed. Moreover, even if the children cannot readily articulate the core set of cultural values that are implied by their expressions, they can still detect that even these implicit values clash with those being promoted in school. This can lead to a reluctance to engage in certain educational activities because of their violation of cultural norms. Yet, when efforts to infuse Afrocultural ethos are made, certain potential benefits can accrue. There will be increased likelihood that existing and emerging skills and competencies will be deployed in formal school settings. There will be greater opportunity for active academic task engagement, more practice of relevant intellectual skills in school contexts. It is also feasible that school as an institution will connect up better with other aspects of their social ecology, and not be an experience disjointed from their everyday cultural lives. School can become perhaps an outlet for the positive, proactive and constructive renditions of Afrocultural expression.

In the foreseeable future, there remains a need for all children in America to become steeped in mainstream culture. The institutions of our society demand this.

School becomes the logical place where many children should learn these customs, values and behavioral expressions. Mainstream cultural socialization should remain part of the schooling agenda. Yet the key term here is fluency. Children can be taught to become more fluent in the dominant overarching culture. This does not mean they must internalize or become mainstream cultural per se. Yet, this socialization effort need not be hidden. For when the rules of the culture of power are not explicitly taught and little or no attention is given to the issues of integrity and continuity of Afrocultural expression, this is quite likely to lead to "blaming the victim." Children get penalized for not knowing that which they have not been taught. Yet from the child's vantage point this circumstance is likely to lead to less receptiveness to mainstream culture. There is likely to be greater rejection of this cultural system because it is arrogantly displayed without justification and because it is associated with activities and individuals that are perceived to not be in the students' best interests. Yet if the culture of power is presented for what it is and against the backdrop of efforts to honor the children's own frame of reference, then the mainstream socialization function becomes less oppressive and less perplexing to the children, and the children will be more likely to view this effort as not necessarily leading to them having to abandon their existing repertoire and frame of reference. It stands to reason that the functional value of learning how to operate effectively within the confines of mainstream culture will be better appreciated, and the pickup of relevant cultural skills should be more successfully accomplished.

While I believe that the conceptual scenario just delineated is highly plausible and that a logically coherent case has been made for it, it is clear that such cannot stand without direct empirical support. Over the years I and my associates

have launched an empirical research program which attempts to serve this end. The work we have done serves several interlocking yet distinct objectives. Our work speaks to several relevant concerns simultaneously that bear on the claims of this paper. We have tried to be increasingly responsive to the alternative set of framing assumptions and conceptions about motivation and cognition which undergird a talent development orientation. We have tried to contribute greater conceptual clarity and understanding to parameters and processes attendant to the intersection of culture, cognition, motivation and context. We have self-consciously attempted to gain a proactive empirical handle on Afrocultural expression, that is discern whatever benefits would accrue from the incorporation of Afrocultural expression into learning and performance contexts. Ours has been a basic research program, but one aimed at addressing the real and pressing academic problems of extant African American children. We have drawn heavily on the experimental method, because we believe there are certain advantages to be gained in terms of controlling for extraneous variables and maximizing the effects there to be obtained. Moreover through such procedures as experimental manipulation of conditions and random assignment of subjects to these conditions, we can gain special clarity into the crucial and relevant processes, parameters, constructs and even boundaries of the phenomena under scrutiny. We have done all this while well aware of the limitations and pitfalls inherent in basic research. In subsequent efforts, more purely applied work will follow.

We recently completed an investigation which speaks directly to the issue of the personal epistemologies that children bring with them into learning contexts (Boykin, Marryshow and Albury, 1992). We sought to examine the perceptions of

schoolchildren towards high achieving peers. This issue has received noted attention in recent years, inspired by the claim that Black children reject high achieving peers because these peers are perceived as "acting White" (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Fordham, 1988). We reasoned that given the presence of the mainstream cultural deep structure in which schooling is typically embedded, many Black children may not be rejecting high achievement per se, but the context in which high achievement has been traditionally bound to, and the cultural values yoked to this achievement. Thus we reasoned that if high achievement were linked to different more culturally compatible contexts, then the perceptions of Black students might be more favorable. We presented fourth and fifth grade low income, Black and White children with four hypothetical learning context scenarios. Each scenario depicted a different high achieving student, that the children in the study were instructed to view as a classmate. One high achiever did so through individualistic striving, that is in working alone and keeping materials to themselves; another achieved through interpersonal competition, that is trying to be the best among the students in outshining all others; a third achieved through cooperative/communal means that is through sharing and interdependent group work; and the fourth achieved via a high level of verve, that is in the midst of a several ongoing simultaneous activities and with much variation in subject matter and learning/teaching methods in a given unit time. The first two approaches are drawn from mainstream cultural ethos and the latter two are consistent with Afrocultural ethos. Each child was presented with all four high achiever orientations and answered a set of four questions about their social acceptance of the child depicted in each scenario. Our findings revealed that the Black children clearly

rejected the high achievers depicted in the mainstream cultural learning scenarios. But they fully embraced those who succeeded via Afrocultural expression. Moreover, the White children were substantially more accepting of the high achievers who did so in the context of mainstream cultural ethos than were the Black children. However the Black children were substantially more accepting of the high achievers who did so via Afrocultural expression than was the case for the White students. This study was conducted in a southern metropolitan community. Similar results to those obtained for the Black students in this study were also obtained from a low-income sample of 4th grade Black children in a large northeastern city as well (Boykin and Marryshow, 1992).

These results speak to the issue of cultural phenomenology, to the cultural lenses that children may utilize in academic settings. We may have demonstrated that there is a positive social orientation towards those who achieve through vervistic or communal/cooperative means. Left unanswered thus far is whether allowing for Afrocultural expression in learning and task contexts facilitates performance. This issue has been addressed in several studies.

Several investigations have examined the possible enhancement effects attributed to increased task presentation variability. This manipulation is taken as an operationalization of the verve dimension (Boykin, 1979; Boykin, 1982; Tuck and Boykin, 1989). While all the studies have produced consistent findings, perhaps the most illuminating one is that of Tuck and Boykin (1989). They assessed the performance of a sample of low income Black and White grade school children (fourth and sixth grades) across four distinctly different types of problem solving tasks. The tasks were presented under two conditions. In one, the four task types,

five examples of each, were presented in a blocked sequential format such that all five of one type were first presented, five of a second, etc. In the second condition, the four task types, and thus twenty tasks in all, were presented in a random sequential fashion, without regard to type. The former condition was considered to be less varied, while the latter was a more varied presentation format. We also took a measure from the children on their perception of the stimulation level of their homes. We asked questions concerning factors like the amount of time music was played, television was on, the amount of loud talking and active games that transpired in the home environment etc.. We also obtained measures on each child in terms of the level of stimulation variability they preferred. Ratings were also obtained from each child's homeroom teacher in terms of academic standing and classroom motivation level. Scores on a standardized reading achievement measure were also secured for each child.

Results revealed that the homes of the Black children were rated higher in stimulation level and the Black children exhibited preference for greater stimulation variability than their White counterparts. However, the classroom teachers rated the White children higher on the average in classroom academic achievement level and in level of classroom motivation. Even though these children were drawn from the same classes, the distribution of achievement and motivation ratings for the two groups scarcely overlapped. There was physical integration here. But in terms of classroom performance, segregation remained quite high. White children also scored higher on the standardized reading achievement test.

Results also revealed a race by treatment interaction with the task performance data. While under the relatively unvaried format condition the White

children significantly outperformed the Black children, under the more varied format condition, the two groups did not differ. Actually both the White and Black children performed significantly better in the varied than they did in the non varied format condition. However the increment in performance was substantially greater for the Black children. They were more responsive to the varied format manipulation. Also, for the Black children, home stimulation perception was negatively related to the academic indicators. That is the higher the rated home stimulation, the lower were these children rated in classroom achievement and motivation and the lower were their reading scores. But more proactively, home stimulation was positively related to preference for stimulation variability. There also was obtained a significant positive correlation between home stimulation perception and performance under the varied format condition. Thus, the greater was the home stimulation the higher was the stimulation variability level preferred and the higher was performance under the varied format. Variability preference was found to be positively related to varied task performance. These latter findings, taken together, are noteworthy. They suggest that receptiveness to variability and in turn performance responsiveness to variability is seemingly cultivated in the home environment for the Black children. In its simplest terms is culture not what is cultivated?

In a recent Doctoral Dissertation, Albury (1992) investigated the effects of certain group vs. individual learning conditions on vocabulary test performance of low income 4th grade Black and White schoolchildren. The methods utilized were based on ones established previously with African American college students which demonstrated the superiority of group over individual learning via a basic research

paradigm (Jagers, 1987; Ellison, 1988). After an initial pretest to ascertain a priori word knowledge, children were assigned to one of four different learning conditions. These were, (1) Individual Criterion--where three children working at the same table were given separate study materials and told that any one of them achieving 18 (out of 25 possible) correct on a post test would receive a reward. (2) Interpersonal Competition-- where three children at the same table were given separate materials and told whichever one of them receives the highest score on the second test would receive a reward. (3) Group Competition-where three participants at the same table were given one set of materials between them and told they were competing against other groups to receive a reward. and (4) Communal--where the three persons at a table were given one set of materials and were not offered the opportunity to earn a reward. Instead, they were encouraged to work together and were told of the importance of sharing and helping each other out, for the good of the group. In each condition, participants were allotted 20 minutes study time. In each learning session, the three children were of the same race, but mixed in gender. The first two were individual study conditions deemed consistent with traditional educational practice and mainstream culture. Group competition was drawn from the prototypical cooperative learning paradigm utilized by Slavin and his associates (Slavin, 1983). The fourth was conceived to be an operationalization of a dimension of Afrocultural ethos. If children are operating with a sense of communalism, then a reward inducement or the lure of competition should not be necessary to inspire learning.

Results revealed that the White children's learning gains were at their highest in the two individual study conditions and at their lowest in the

communal condition. Black children's gains were at their highest under the communal condition, next under the group competition and at their lowest under the individual criterion condition. While the White children substantially outperformed their Black counterparts at second testing which had followed the individual criterion learning condition, the Black children significantly outperformed their White counterparts when testing followed the communal study condition. Indeed, the Black children under the communal condition produced the highest second test performance and highest learning gains in the entire study. Additional findings of interest were obtained. It was revealed that Black children expressed greater liking for the group study conditions than did the White children, whereas the White children expressed greater preference for the individual study conditions than did the Black children. Black children displayed greater interpersonal liking for their study mates than did the White children in the communal condition and they reported utilizing more sophisticated learning strategies in the communal condition than did their White counterparts. However in the individual study conditions, the White children reported the more sophisticated strategies.

In other research (Boykin and Allen, 1988; Allen and Boykin, 1991), it has been demonstrated that when rhythmic music is present along with opportunities for coordinating it with movement expression, this led to enhanced learning to pair specified pictures together for low income 1st and 2nd grade Black children, but proved detrimental to the learning of comparable White children. Yet when Black and White children's learning was compared under a condition where music and movement opportunities were not afforded, White children displayed superior

performance (Allen and Boykin, 1991). Black children also expressed overwhelming preference for learning under a rhythmic music/movement condition (Allen, 1987).

We would be the first to indicate that there are limitations with the work we have done. We recognize that until more work is done, caution should be attached to any conclusions now drawn. Additional conditions must be run. Different permutations and combinations of contexts must be attempted. More refined and upgraded operationalizations of pertinent variables must be executed. Different subject populations must be employed. Different tasks, different cognitive and motivational demands must be examined. We must better understand underlying processes and mechanisms. Research that is more squarely applied in nature is surely needed. Yet in spite of the limitations, we are confident that certain points stressed in this paper have been illuminated and reinforced by our work to date. Indeed many of our major findings seem quite consistent with themes advanced in this paper.

For example in our work on the perception of high achievers, it seems plausible that the children did bring their own personal lenses to bear on the social evaluations of their hypothetical peers and their peers' corresponding academic inclinations. The Black students did not perceive achievement as occurring in culturally neutral terrains; nor did they dismiss high achievement as a terminal value. Instead there was clear indication that the instrumental means to attain academic success and the pedagogical contexts in which the achievement was embedded, were responded to differentially, or at least perceived with different degrees of favor. These children did not think neutrally. The notion of

intersubjectivity is implicated here as well. If teachers traditionally are inclined to look more favorably on individualistic and interpersonally competitive high achievers, or at least expect greater success from them, then they will likely be on a different evaluative wave length from many African American students. And if there is incessant yoking of achievement to only such contexts and modes of operation, then it could lead over time to an alienation from high achievement for many Black children.

In examining the several studies which have attempted to operationalize learning and performance contexts which could capitalize on Afrocultural expression, several points have been illuminated. For one, it should be noted that within the various studies, surely different conditions or contexts were utilized. However in each study, in the differing conditions, the same materials to be learned were employed, the same tasks had to be performed, the same intellectual standards were in force. However the different conditions lead to significantly different levels of learning or performance just the same. Children were not given special hints or insights or coaching or information or skills to produce the obtained differences. They brought whatever undergirded the advantages with them to the situations in which they found themselves. They brought the insights, skills, strategies or whatever. Levels of learning and performance clearly demonstrated in one condition are not so in others. This seems to point squarely to the importance of the context for cognitive functioning. And in these instances, the importance of cultural context. Certain culturally facilitating contexts seem to trigger competencies, skills and performances unrevealed in other contexts. Black children bring sophisticated learning strategies to bear without prompting that they must have acquired

elsewhere and which seemingly proved advantageous and that were probably also utilized by the White students but in contexts not examined in our work. The culturally facilitating contexts apparently allowed for the exercise of skills previously picked up, practiced and exercised in similar contexts in the past. But in ones that likely did not occur in school at least not on an official basis. Cues present in these facilitating contexts elicited processes that have served these Black children well in prior, more than likely non-school experiences.

Non-cognitive processes are also implicated. Not only were different levels of performance and learning generated but different levels of motivation as well. Black students expressed greater preferences and liking for the contexts more consistent with Afrocultural ethos. Orientations towards the tasks to be completed differed. Seemingly different dynamics were operative. Performance advantages were obtained without the employment of external reward inducements. Indeed, evidence was obtained that attainment was superior in a culturally appropriate context without reward inducement over conditions where an external reward was explicitly presented. Intrinsic motivational processes likely were activated. Some evidence was also gleaned that performance enhancement is tied to enduring personal preferences and factors associated with the children's home environments.

All of this evidence taken together suggests that what has been operative in our work amounts to prescriptive pedagogy (Boykin, 1983; Allen and Boykin, In Press). By this term is meant the fashioning of particular experimental task and learning conditions, contexts and scenarios that are prescriptions for effective, facilitating instructional approaches for African American children in actual classroom settings.

Still, it is important that the claims just made are properly qualified as we draw specific implications for classroom practice. Nothing in the arguments and inferences drawn from our results should lead one to suggest that Black children can not learn, will not perform in the absence of contexts which allow for Afrocultural expression or which are imbued with characteristics of Afrocultural ethos. Indeed, it cannot be claimed that appropriate intellectual, cognitive or motivational processes wont be developed, displayed or deployed or that high achievement wont be obtained otherwise. This is purely fallacious. We can assert however the contexts in question do appear to be cognitively and motivationally facilitating and this should be useful information for those who choose to take a talent development approach to schooling.

Other qualifiers are needed as well. I fully recognize that not all demands in schools, not all tasks to be performed will be facilitated for example by variability in format presentation. Surely dancing rhythmically while learning cant be allowed at all times, or even to predominate instructional time. Surely certain activities, like perhaps much of test taking, cannot be invariably done in groups. But the arguments tendered in this paper do not require that these things be so. Surely, some cultural expressions or contexts may better serve certain demands or subject matters than others. The fact is there is an array of Afrocultural expressions available, which allows for flexibility in their applications. The focus properly should be on maximizing those opportunities when a particular Afrocultural factor can work but also be vigilant to those situations where it is inappropriate. This is a lesson not just for teachers and educational personnel, but for the Black children as well. Black children should become discriminating in the use of their cultural

capital. They must be taught a "sense of audience," (Goodnow, 1990). That is they must learn to discern the time and the place for the deployment of certain expressions and that not every academic instance will be occasion for Afrocultural ethos manifestations. Indeed in the foreseeable future, there is wisdom in schooling Black children in the ways of the current culture of power. The adaptive participation of African American children in mainstream culture should remain one essential educational goal. But in the course of this being done, we simply must not lose sight of the cultural integrity that so many of these children have brought with them, its attendant adaptive significance, and the experiences, competencies and perspectives associated.

As we look to implement talent development; as we look to incorporate Afrocultural ethos into the deep structure of schooling, we must be mindful of certain other considerations as well. Teaching by definition in its classical configuration, is an approximation process. When a single instructor stands in front of a room and presents information simultaneously to several students, it must be understood that no one approach will ever equally capture, or fully engage and be cognitive facilitating for every child in the classroom. There will be individual variation among children at a given time, and indeed the same children may likely vary in what they are receptive to across time. Moreover, several different cultural agendas may be operative if it is a multiethnic classroom. This does present the instructor with a highly challenging responsibility. While there would be this diversity to take heed of, it must be noted that this has always been the case in multiethnic classrooms. This is not a new challenge. It has been with us ever since the enforcement of legal integration. However this challenge has been ignored in the

wake of the continuing preoccupation with homogenization in our nation's schools. Yet schooling has always had a decidedly cultural landscape, but we have come to treat this terrain too often as though it were culturally neutral. The historically mandated mainstream acculturation function continues to be pushed even while there are insistent claims that educators are utilizing techniques and activities devoid of cultural connotation. How paradoxical! This approach has had broadly debilitating consequences in the multiethnic classroom.

I argue that when faced with the classical teacherstudent learning configuration, we should first acknowledge that teaching in this format is an approximation process. In light of this, in the multiethnic classroom, with its attendant group diversity and which overlays individual diversity, we should strive to provide the best pedagogical goodness of fit that captures and engages most effectively the greatest number of students in that classroom at a given time. Even given this posture, the question still remains, when activities must be conducted in the form of one teacher addressing several students simultaneously in a multiethnic classroom, how do we satisfy at once the diverse needs and interests? This is not an easy undertaking. But the fact that such a question can be seriously posed, that one takes seriously the answer to such a question represents a willingness to entertain a talent development approach. This is a positive step in its own right. But to the point at hand, it would seem to require the development of alternative, multicultural pedagogies which allow for culturally diverse expressions, or which at least may not dishonor the integrity of diverse expressions. It suggests the utilization of contexts that may be facilitating for children who have been traditionally placed at risk but ones which are not debilitating for those children who have thrived under

more traditional approaches.

Yet another implication is that different kinds of pedagogical arrangements may be necessary. The talent development classroom may not fit the classical configurations. We may see multiple group activities each with its own distinctive defining context and with different types of activities going on simultaneously in the same classroom. Children may be presented with the lesson's information and corresponding instructions and then prompted if not actually taught to then practice the requisite cognitive skills individually or collectively by infusing the concocted learning situation themselves with their own cultural markers and practice techniques. So when doing the prescribed seatwork, one child may choose to work all of the problems of one type of subject matter first before going on to another type etc., while another child would be allowed to skip among the problems from different subject matter in the course of time. One child may work their lesson while listening to music via headphones while another may not. Some children may elect to work in communal groups, others may elect to team up and compete against other teams of students in the working of the lesson, in order to master the content, and so on. Children could be encouraged to use facilitating strategies when doing their homework assignments as well.

Surely some students of color have and others will continue to be academically successful in our nation's schools as they are presently configured and in spite of these paradoxical perplexities. This seems to more strikingly be the case for immigrant minority children who are first generation American students (Ogbu, 1990). These successes will continue to be used as evidence that cultural "differences" do not or should not matter in the education of children, that the

problems of schooling reside therefore with the students themselves and their prior experiences, and consequently the system does not require major reform efforts or reform is justified, it would not be on cultural grounds. This line of reasoning however is more befitting a talent assessment approach.

Furthermore, we should not lose sight that the economic, social and general living demands of the 21st century are likely to necessitate all children becoming more multiculturally fluent. As we move toward a more service oriented society, the cultivation of speaking as a performance and the importance of affective expressiveness and sensitivity may loom more large. As the pace of work life becomes increasingly fast paced, being able to shift focus among several different tasks simultaneously may become quite adaptive, and music and could come to serve therapeutic functions on the job. Moreover as this society and even the world become more interdependent a healthy sense of genuine communalism may prove advantageous.

The Axiom of Overdetermination and Its Educational Implications

The incorporation of Afrocultural expression into pedagogical contexts is strongly advocated here. Yet it must be understood that such is not the one and only panacea or the only plausible route to effective educational reform. Cultural analyses and interventions may be sufficient but they are not necessary. A cultural approach does not exhaust all the educational possibilities. Yet I firmly believe that a cultural approach must still be emphasized. This is so because the role that culture plays in general in the schooling enterprise continues to be greatly misunderstood and often inappropriately minimized and because there has been substantial denial, distortion and lack of appreciation of Afrocultural ethos and its functional import in

school settings. Indeed pervasive and penetrating educational transformations should ensue from cultural considerations and interventions. But the expanse of relevant issues is not fully depicted here. There are other problems with schools besides purely cultural ones and there are other routes to success in schools besides those requiring cultural maps. Even when cultural considerations are brought in it remains that there are several layers and facets to the schooling enterprise to be considered.

It is important consequently, to invoke the axiom of overdetermination when it comes to understanding the processes, practices and outcomes of schooling. By this is meant that when any event occurs it has happened for several from a host of possible reasons, even though but one reason might be sufficient to produce it. Also multiple events occur in any setting simultaneously and the reasons for their occurrence may overlap, or be symbiotically or catalytically related. With this in mind, it must be asserted that there are many immediately operative components at the nexus of the schooling process. They include at least the following seven: (1) The immediate educational context (2) The focal (curriculum) content or subject matter (3) The teacher (4) The student him/herself (5) The student's peers (6) The student's parents (7) The broader school/institutional context. Any of these components can serve as reasons, instigations or sources of a given student's observed academic behavior. Moreover, a given academic behavior can or will occur because of any if not all of these factors while one may suffice. Thus, such considerations as pedagogical techniques and learning contexts, school subject or specific curriculum information, teacher interactional/interpersonal style, a student's independent achievement orientation, peer and parents' orientations, and

the school's institutional structure, can all play roles in the production of academic behaviors. Moreover a given academic behavior itself may have multiple components, intentions or meanings. For the sake of clarity, let us narrow our focus to academically successful (or positive) or unsuccessful (or negative) outcomes.

There can be multiple pathways to success and failure in schools. Yet any one pathway may be sufficient to produce a given result. But not any one is necessary. These seven components or sources can be construed as ranging from a very positive through a neutral to a very negative influence on a given academic outcome. Each component or pathway can also differ in its relative strength of influence as well. We can not rule out that a putatively negative influence may lead to a positive academic outcome; like punishment or doing well to spite a teacher's low expectation.

Thus for example, success can come from several sources. It can result from pedagogically effective techniques and learning contexts, from rousing and interesting content, from interpersonally inspiring teachers, from highly effortful students who persist even in unsupportive academic contexts or who seem oblivious to context and wish to succeed come hell or high water, from peer and from parental support to succeed and from a "success-oriented" institutional structure or climate. The obverses would also obtain. Academic failure may ensue from unresponsive learning contexts, from bland and personally irrelevant subject matter, from ineffective or alienating teachers, from distracting peers, from uninvolved parents and from a poor overall climate for learning. Any or all of these factors in their positive or negative manifestations may be operative for a given

student and any one in and of itself may be sufficient to yield academic success or failure. And what is done is done for more than one reason or when a negative influence is present it may be countered effectively by a positive consideration or a success producing vector. For example a given student may succeed in the face of an unsupportive overall climate, an uninspiring teacher and uninvolved parents because of the more overwhelming influence of wanting to impress his or her peers, or a particular peer. One may succeed in the face of boring content because of the lure of a valued external reward. A communally oriented child may succeed anyway in an individualistically oriented classroom because they like the teacher or because they wish to avoid parental sanctions or otherwise receive parental pressure to be successful. This suggests a resultant approach to academic outcomes may be a useful framework. Assuming that a child has the given capacity, success is bred when there is a positive differential from the sum of the weighted (by level of positivity or negativity for a given component and that vector's strength of influence) positive vs. negative operative vectors (components) that are brought to bear. Another implication which follows from this resultant approach is that reversing the direction of a negative influence is not necessary to produce academic success. We can look to increase the positive influence of another component to change a failure experience into a success experience. So the "problem" may stem from one domain but the "solution" may come from another or others. Although it would be advantageous to at least "neutralize" the negative sources.

Beyond all this, there are also several ways in which a given component can have positive or negative manifestations. Indeed, there is ample literature in support of any of these vectors as producers of positive or negative academic outcomes.

Consider first the domain of educational context, which has been the principle focus of this paper.

Insights into the debilitating influences of traditional classroom contexts have already been provided in this paper (see also Slavin et al, 1985; Levin, 1987). Then too, there exists compelling evidence that students can benefit from more effective learning contexts. There is the work of Sternberg (1985) among others on training in critical thinking skills. There is the work of the neo-Vygotsky scholars showing enhanced outcomes from utilization of zone of proximal development principles (Belmont, 1989; Brown and Palinscar, 1986). There is the work on cooperative learning (Slavin et al, 1985; Johnson and Johnson, 1990) and on peer tutoring (Greenwood, Delquadri, and Hall, 1989). After school tutorials, novel incentive structures, non-linear classroom chair configurations, smaller class sizes can all prove effective (Schools That Work, 1987; Programs That Work, 1990; Beady and Slavin, 1981; Rosenfield, Lambert and Black, 1985). There is evidence that incorporating advances in video and computer software technology can be fruitful as well (Programs That Work, 1990; Wilson, 1991). Indeed, creatively employing such advanced technology can be linked to other beneficial pedagogical techniques to enhance these proven techniques further. Then there is the work on providing culturally responsive pedagogical contexts, including our own, which should be considered.

In terms of curriculum content, there is evidence that the subject matter often presented may be boring and bland for many, when no effort is made to link it to children's everyday lives (Levin, 1987). Yet there is reason to believe that when content is hooked to student's personal and real world experiences, to relevant

ethnic and cultural histories and information, that positive results will ensue (Miller-Jones, 1989; Programs that Work, 1990; Newsweek, 1991; Levin, 1987). When curriculum content allows for coordination of themes across subject matter, rather than it being presented in compartmentalized, disjointed fashion, this also is likely to prove beneficial (Programs That Work, 1990; Kretovics, Farber and Armaline, 1991).

In terms of teacher interactional processes, there has been a substantial and longstanding literature showing the negative effects on achievement that follow from negative teacher expectations (Irvine, 1990). Negative teacher attitudes can readily turn children off. Common sense alone persuades us that there exist large cadres of "master teachers" who are gifted at getting a wide assortment of children to learn regardless of the students' backgrounds, the blandness of the subject matter content etc. Evidence also exists that interpersonally inspiring and caring teachers can have life changing influences on Black children and be almost single handedly responsible for putting certain children's lives onto successful tracks (Bond, 1972; Brown, 1968). When teachers are less than effective, either interpersonally or in terms of pedagogical techniques, then ongoing in-service teacher training opportunities should prove beneficial (Kretovics, Farber and Armaline, 1991; Irvine, 1990)

In terms of certain characteristics they display, some children can be readily classified by many educators as "good students," and some as "poor students." The good students seem to possess a knack for education as it is presently constituted; a knack that they simply may have brought with them to school, quite apart from what school has to offer them (Lee et al. 1991). They may possess what might

commonly be referred to as high academic self esteem, or an achievement orientation; or display the proper achievement attributions (Graham, 1989; Taylor, 1991). Put in other terms, they may exhibit quite readily attributes consistent with those demanded by the schools. These would include such factors as delay of gratification, high need for achievement; emotional containment; internal locus of controls and likes. Consider that Alexander and Entwisle (1988) have reported that the propensities to display gratification delay and emotional containment are associated with greater achievement in 1st and 2nd grade Black and White children. This is not an isolated finding. Poor students on the other hand can be characterized by the absence of the attributes ascribed to good students. Beyond this, children who are not grasping well certain school-based skills can be helped by programs that are sensitively diagnostic and which align remediation directly with this feedback (Programs That Work, 1990).

The works of Ogbu and Fordham (Ogbu, 1990; Fordham and Ogbu, 1986; Fordham, 1988) seem to indicate that many Black children face peer pressure not to succeed in school. Out of fear of being accused of and socially ostracized for "acting White" by their peers, it is advanced that many Black children shy away from producing successful academic outcomes. Yet it is also known that when there is peer support for it, academic achievement is enhanced (Clark, 1991). Moreover there is evidence that the utilization of reciprocal peer teaching and cooperative learning activities can lead to greater peer interpersonal liking and greater peer support for high achievement among Black students (Fordham, 1991; Garibaldi, 1979). Our own work cited previously is consistent with this as well (Albury, 1992)

Surely lack of parental support and involvement can prove problematic for children. Parents who are uninformed may not be as effectively instrumental in their children's school success as parents who are informed of schooling activities. There is evidence to indicate that certain parenting practices are associated with academic success for Black children (Clark, 1983; Slaughter-Defoe et al, 1990). The factors which comprise successful academic socialization are typically associated with breeding those characteristics linked to the "good student" described above. Then too, efforts aimed creating greater parental involvement have led to enhanced achievement for educationally at risk Black children (Kretovics, Farber and Armaline, 1991; Schools That Work, 1987; Reynolds, 1989). In the successful school program interventions promoted by James Comer (1988), parents have been involved even to the point of having input into school academic program planning.

Poor academic climates can lead to academic failure as well. There is a substantial literature on effective schools. It is presumed that when schools are not institutionally configured in the ways that effective schools are, this can lead to negative educational consequences for an unacceptable number of their students. Consider that Edmonds (1986) among others, has argued that "...variability in the distribution of achievement among school age children derives from variability in the nature of schools to which they go." Moreso, the advocates of effective schools would argue, than variations in students backgrounds and personal characteristics. Edmonds has offered five criteria for effective schools. First there is (1) effective leadership. For Edmonds and others, this is primary. For an effective school leader will set the tone for and even mandate the operationalization of the remaining four criteria. These are (2) well-articulated and widely accepted school focus and

objectives, (3) safe and positive physical and affective climate, (4) teachers committed to the idea that all children can learn and (5) an emphasis on the importance of assessment and standardized testing. Clearly some of these considerations dovetail with factors associated with the other components. It is also the case that these considerations can help form an institutional superstructure for some of the specific practices suggested in the other components.

While offering the additional explanatory complexities in this section, it remains crucial that we still not lose sight of the cultural ramifications which even inhere in this multi-component explanatory framework. While cultural considerations do not exhaust all examples of effective practices, they are widely pervasive. Indeed issues of cultural deep structure do non-trivially inform all facets of the schooling enterprise. As cases in point, it has already been argued that techniques that flow from Vygotsky zone principles are largely culturally informed (Rogoff, 1990). Cooperative learning and even peer tutoring dovetail with communalism. When we bring into the curriculum the everyday and personal experiences of African American children, for example, we are bound to include aspects of Afrocultural ethos. The negative teacher expectations are often predicated on pejorative impressions of Afrocultural expressions and a failure to appreciate the integrity of Afrocultural ethos, as mainstream oriented educators find their own cultural sensibilities violated. Yet, more interpersonally inspiring and caring teachers are ones who will capitalize on the affective dimension of Afrocultural expression. The characteristics of the so called "good student" quite obviously are in line with attributes of the culture of power which are typically demanded in school. Thus it should not be surprising that such characteristics would positively

correlate with academic achievement in traditional school settings. Moreover, if school achievement is largely embedded in mainstream cultural ethos, then it may not be that Black students are largely rejecting high achievement per se, but as was found in Boykin, Marryshow and Albury (1992), they may be rejecting the contexts and modalities that have been associated with high achievement, vehicles which these students have associated with their own dishonorment and failures in school, and which even violate their own cultural sensibilities. Yet when achievement is linked to Afrocultural expression, there is reason to believe that peer rejection will not as readily follow. Parents should be more greatly informed of their own cultural baggage and biases as well as those which inhere in the schooling process so that they can make more insightful choices in the academic preparation of their children and so that they may even come to serve as cultural advocates for their children. When there is greater respect shown by school personnel for the parents' own cultural expressions, the parents may be less reticent to be involved in schooling activities. Moreover if the educational leadership at a given school suscribes to principles of talent development and multiculturalism, then there will be well articulated objectives, consistent with the notion that all children can learn, consistent with a positive affective climate, and done where children are less likely to see their peers or teachers as adversaries and therefore a physically safer climate would ensue. Under these circumstances, as children are more positively academically engaged and their intellectual skills are more functionally mined, they should fair better when assessed, under standardized conditions or otherwise.

Among the chief impediments to genuine and fruitful educational reform is that the various major players in the schooling enterprise may be operating with

fundamentally different agendas and that more processes and outcomes are present along with straightforward manifestations of success and failure per se. A given teacher's major concerns might be to maintain order, enforce adherence to rules and minimize classroom disruption. A student's peers might be preoccupied with solidarity among students, with winning group-based interpersonal contests against teachers, and with peer social relationships and popularity. A given student might be focused more squarely on issues of resistance to the teacher's dictates and with developing techniques aimed at fostering resiliency in the face of perceived efforts to discredit, demean, undermine or disempower him or her (Winfield, 1991). Among other things, this allows for the maintenance of self esteem and self efficacy. The student's parents may be centering on their child minding them and their child's teacher(s) and their children getting an education in its classical sense. Administrators may be focused on minimizing controversy in their school; on themselves and/or their school "looking good" in the eyes of their superiors; and on the relative standing of their school on achievement tests. In these examples it is clear that factors like resilience promotion, social networking, public relations and behavioral control would be coexisting with academic achievement outcomes. There are efforts to maintain the status quo and to disrupt the status quo present here as well. It also seems to follow that many of these agendas although perhaps disparate or even working at cross purposes, nevertheless feed off of each other in adaptively symbiotic ways.

In spite of the challenges posed by these disparate intentions and foci, it is not unreasonable to posit that reform efforts will stand a better chance of being effective if the agendas, priorities and intentions of these various educational

participants were in better synchrony and all at least in large part consistent with supporting the academic success of the students involved. It would seem to follow that getting the bulk if not all of the participants to embrace genuinely the principles of talent development, to accept the objectives of proactive deep-structure multiculturalism, while including the need for adaptive, culturally fluent participation in the reigning culture of power, then we can funnel the activities and agendas of these participants and the relevant pedagogical contexts and content into reasonably coordinated efforts which converge in principally focusing on the academic success of the students. The greater the number of the components that are focused principally on producing academically successful outcomes, the less likely the students will fail to develop intellectually with regards to school based competencies. Indeed, success becomes overdetermined. Indeed, I believe that a major consequence of a proactive cultural deep structure, talent development approach will be the actualization of a failure proof school.

Concluding Statements

Of necessity, this paper has covered considerable explanatory and analytical ground. The intent was to be sufficiently comprehensive and penetrating in illuminating relevant concerns to be addressed in the proposing of educational reform. It might be useful to very briefly revisit the line of argument presently developed.

Proactive educational reform for African American children must be understood against the backdrop of historical, psychological and cultural forces and factors which have shaped much of the character of present day American education. This backdrop then provides for greater appreciation of the

configurations such reform efforts should take, the depth of change necessary, and the directions of such change. Consequently, this paper began with a discussion of the historical functions and purposes that schooling has served in American society. It is claimed that two major objectives for American schools have thus emerged. Schools traditionally have served a talent assessment function and they have sought to socially homogenize all students into the acceptance of mainstream cultural ethos. It is then argued that serious and effective educational reform must be predicated on alternative objectives for schooling. Rather than talent assessment, there should be talent development. Rather than social homogenization, there should be deep structure multiculturalism. It is further argued that to make such a shift in objectives requires a shift in the operative underlying assumptions about appropriate pedagogy, and learning/thinking and motivational processes. After contrasting the assumptions of talent assessment with those of talent development, the importance of context with respect to a talent development approach is then advanced and this served as a segue to a discussion of deep structure multiculturalism. The ways in which mainstream culture pervades the schooling process was then illuminated as were the potential detrimental consequences of such manifestations for culturally diverse children. The call generally for the implementation of more culturally responsive pedagogy is then made. The specific case for the incorporation of Afrocultural ethos is presented, and then while drawing heavily on our own work at Howard, there followed discussion and examples of the benefits which may arise from such Afrocultural incorporation and the pitfalls from a lack of such infusion. A wider matrix of explanatory issues is then entertained which serve to complicate efforts at school reform. These issues are then intersected with the concerns of

talent development and deep structure multiculturalism in order to illuminate how school reform could nevertheless still come to a successful fruition.

Even in the attempt to be reasonably comprehensive and penetrating, this effort still comes up short in many ways. More could have been said for example about the politics of schooling and school reform. More could have been said about the impinging role of the wider society and its attendant social structure. African American children's experiences out of school are not exclusively marked by Afrocultural ethos. They function within mainstream spheres and they also see the world through the lenses of an oppressed racial minority group with all of the attendant phenomenological implications. More could have been said about these considerations. Teacher training was scarcely touched. Some limitations had to be imposed presently. Elsewhere I have discussed pertinent issues of social structure (Boykin, 1983; 1986), issues concerning the mainstream and minority experiences (Boykin, 1986; Boykin and Ellison, In Press) and ones concerning teacher education (Boykin, In Press).

While more could have been said, hopefully enough was to give the reader a sense for the challenges, complexities, perplexities, pitfalls and promises that will accompany genuine educational reform for African American children, if not for all children, as we stand at the gateway to the 21st century.

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TABLE 1

A. Wade Boykin

Educational Implications of Cultural Deep Structure Analysis 1. Cultural Integrity

A. When lack of integrity appreciation

1. More control time than academic time

2. Greater negative teacher expectancy set

3. Increased chance of classroom power contests

B. When sufficient integrity appreciation

1. Increased focus on pedagogy

2. Enhanced perceptions of academic potential

3. Increased chance of educational partnerships

2. Cultural Continuity

A. When lack of cultural continuity

1. Lack of outlets for existing competencies

2. Skills honed in out of school contexts

3. Dampened motivation

4. Implicit values contradicted by school values

B. When sufficient cultural continutiy

1. Increased chance for skill deployment in school

2. Increased academic practice

3. Greater school connectedness

3. Mainsream Cultural Fluency

A. When rules of culture of power not explicitly taught and first two domains are unaddressed

1. Increased chance to be penalized and blamed for not knowing
2. Decreased receptiveness to mainstream culture

B. When rules taught and predicated on first two domains

1. Socialization is demystified and less insidious 2. Increased appreciation for functional value of understanding mainstream culture